BOOK REVIEWS.

Burt, Cyril. *The Young Delinquent.* University of London Press, Ltd., London, 1925. Pp. 643. Price 17s. 6d. nett.

Of high excellence indeed is this book on juvenile delinquency by Dr. Cyril Burt. Based particularly on his studies of 200 young offenders, it is written throughout with reference to the literature of the subject and to the findings of others that betokens the author's sound scholarship. And more than this, it has no inconsiderable literary flavour which stamps the work as being not a mere compilation of facts, but much more than this, a work of scientific imagination. We are thankful for this when so many of us are merely delvers for facts; we are grateful for the essential readableness of the book.

Quite naturally the reviewer could do nothing but commend the general standpoint of Burt's work, when it insists, as it does over and over, explicitly as well as implicitly, upon the utter need which there is and always must be, of regarding the offender as a particular individual, a special case, to be studied if he is to be understood, and to be understood if he is to be treated with success. The make-up of different individuals, their backgrounds, their experiences, their environmental conditions, their mental life, the direct precursor of delinquency and crime, all these vary so greatly that the field of group treatment is not great.

The failure of institutional treatment, whether educational or reformative, is perhaps hardly dwelled on enough by Burt to convince the ordinary man who has never looked into this topic, but undoubtedly it is the basis of the author's perception of the needs of the individual approach.

Then, too, the reviewer feels no little satisfaction in Dr. Burt's thesis concerning the multiple determination of delinquency. The author believes that delinquency "is assignable to no single, universal source, nor yet to two or three: it springs from a wide variety, and usually from a multiplicity, of alternative and converging influences." This matter of complex causation is important, not only for theoretical considerations, but also in the practical issues implied for treatment.

There can be no doubt that Dr. Burt attempts to see clearly through the whole situation, with reference both to the individual and to his environment, giving the whole picture that one finds when studying the particular delinquent in relation to his specific delinquency. The slap-dash of many writers on delinquency and crime, who hold some pet theory, is altogether absent from such a well balanced work as this. It would be interesting to contrast it for these qualities with whole library shelves of older criminological works, a task that might well be set for some earnest student of sociology.

Dr. Burt undertakes some utilization of the method of comparison, using some observations of non-delinquents for this purpose. This is a most desirable procedure; would that it could be done in enough

cases to make the findings worth much; 200 is statistically too few. And then the material is altogether English and local—we must all confess that the findings and generalizations concerning delinquency and crime might be otherwise in other cities and other countries. The close resemblance of many of the findings in London with those of the reviewer earlier in Chicago is, however, a very interesting fact, and is shown many times by Dr. Burt.

Dr. Burt's chapters on psychology will undoubtedly be challenged by a considerable group of contemporary thinkers in this field. There will be definite disagreement with him about his classifications of instinct. He, following James, McDougall, Shand and Drever, will have a good deal to answer for in the eyes of sharp critics of the theories of these psychologists. The reviewer has no special quarrel on this point because the conflict will arise about the details of clasifications and definitions, rather than about the main point of view, not that he thinks it altogether wise in this day and generation to talk about such activities as hunting and acquisitiveness as instinctive. However, the whole problem of instincts has not yet been resolved by anything like a final solution.

One might, of course, pick out errors in the book. We read, for example, on p. 442, of Jesse Pomeroy "who cut a little girl's throat just to see what she'd do." Whether quoted from William James or not, such an example is unfortunate because, in the first place, Jesse Pomeroy never did cut a little girl's throat, and then this particular criminal happens to present evidences of some very interesting mental mechanisms which the author really could have found out about if he had been so disposed. But what boots it about such matters? No author who uses anecdotal material from other sources can have any guarantee of being correct about particular cases... As a matter or fact, Dr. Burt, the reviewer feels, presents very little that is not well calculated to be accurate.

Finally, the reviewer turns from this book with the same feeling with which he comes from his own daily work and conferences on cases of delinquency, namely, with the feeling that in this field, it is data on the problems and effectiveness of different sorts of treatment that are in the greatest needs of being developed. It is the weakest part of Burt's work, as it is with all of us. Turning to his rather slight account of therapeutic endeavour, we see that his *laissez-faire* attitude toward some of the cases he has been connected with, will to some prove rather astonishing; for example, the instance of the girl who, we are told, was allowed to go on with her philanderings throughout her adolescence with the outcome that at twenty-two she had at least not justified early pessimistic fears, and met "dire catastrophe such as had been foretold." The reviewer thinks that the social workers he knows, of fine spirit and great practical experience in handling girls, would hardly allow that such methods were justifiable. On the other hand, Dr. Burt ought to be heard from about such treatment, and indeed we all need to learn, as in any other sciences, from what is accomplished or not accomplished by methods that we would not ordinarily use, or with which we are not familiar.

Dr. Burt's "Young Delinquent" should and must have many readers who will consider well and take to heart its many truths. Not a little will be accmplished for England if the book is widely read there, and we in America will also profit by it.

W. HEALY.

Hobhouse, L. T. *Social Development.* George Allen & Unwin, 1925. 12s. 6d. Pp. 348.

THIS volume is the last of a series of four books which together make up a most impressive survey of social theory. Professor Hobhouse stands head and shoulders above sociological writers of his day both in the breadth and depth of his treatment of sociology. It is hard to convey to anyone not acquainted with Professor Hobhouses' work the immense range of his studies and the firm and unremitting grasp of the problems which he displays. An almost passionate endeavour to probe all the complex problems involved has carried him through his tremendous self-appointed task. It is impossible here to attempt any full analysis of his views. Attention must be concentrated upon his treatment of eugenics. In this volume he deals with "the actual conditions underlying the life of societies" and is thus brought in due course to consider "biological conditions."

"In a sense the biological factor conditions all others," but "since the conditions which are common to men and animals are those which least serve to explain the differences which part men from animals . . . . it is not in the biological conditions that we should look for causes of development of man." The biological conditions are rather "limiting conditions to progress." Starting from this position Professor Hobhouse reviews the phases through which the application of the idea of evolution to society has passed. He shows that the term 'fit' must not be uncritically used. The 'survival of the fittest' gives no guarantee of such progress as is of interest to man. It all depends on the environment. In one type of environment the mean and selfish may survive. In another the brave and honourable. Natural selection may lead to the survival of the fittest but it does not of necessity lead to improvement as judged by any proper standard of values. Faced by the criticism that the struggle for existence between individuals meant anarchy, a certain school of writers shifted their ground and laid stress on the importance of the struggle between groups. This view meets with two criticisms. There is no guarantee that the truly better group will survive any more than there is that the truly better individual will survive in the former case. Further, group struggle means social anarchy not only in international relations but also in internal affairs since it is impossible to have two codes of morals, one for external and one for internal relations.

Professor Hobhouse then approaches the eugenic position. Fitness for survival must be rationally determined. Here there is no ambiguity about fitness. Having given what may be accepted as a fair statement of the opinion of eugenists to-day, he goes on to discuss their views as follows. Given, he says, an unchanging hereditary endowment through several generations, there might be either advance or